

STATEMENT BY

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Mr. Chairman, Representative Waxman, distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today to discuss wounded Soldier pay issues. Our wounded Soldiers deserve the very best compassion and care the Army has to offer. That care includes the assurance and commitment to the Soldier and their families that their pay is correct and sufficient.

Within the Army G1, the U.S. Army Wounded Warrior Program (AW2) assists our wounded Soldiers in a myriad of areas; one of these areas is finance. AW2 receives debt management pay inquiries from several sources such as service members, AW2 Soldier Family Management Specialist, family members, and through various DFAS database reports. Examples of wounded Soldiers issues include identifying theater entitlement overpayment and working with finance offices for debt relief or reducing incorrect payments.

To date, 1170 cases of AW2 Soldiers have been audited with 623 of those cases seeking an overpayment in the amount of \$592,442.77. Over half of those cases submitted were approved for a complete write-off. Of the remaining, 61 cases are currently under review for write off and the remaining cases are beyond the three year statute of limitation for submitting a waiver.

In the past, wounded service members have received deployment entitlements above those authorized. Months later they have a large-lump sum deducted, thus leaving the Soldier and their family with very little pay for a

particular period. Several severely injured service members have incurred this type of debt. The AW2 Finance Support Specialist is dedicated to working very closely with the finance offices to obtain and submit remittance or waiver packets for its Soldiers. AW2, Army Medicine, and DFAS are in constant close coordination to implement and develop proactive processes and procedures to ensure Soldier's financial issues are identified and corrected before the issues become financial burdens to the Soldier and their family. Our efforts to fix these issues immediately when they occur are on-going and we continue to employ a mix of solutions to correct overpayments for Active, Guard and Reserve Soldiers. We have made tremendous effort to eliminate Soldiers' pay issues.

Recent enactments by Congress, such as Traumatic Injury Protection under the Servicemember's Group Life Insurance program, not charging Soldiers for meals received at military treatment facilities, debt remission authority, and Combat-related Rehabilitation Injury Pay, have all helped tremendously in caring for and safeguarding the financial futures of our Soldiers. I am confident that current systems in place coupled with recent legislation will reduce financial disruptions to our wounded Soliders' lives. I look forward to your questions.